

Section F: Who is truly homeless and reasons for being unhoused?

Top reasons that contribute to a person being unhoused

In Emergency Shelter and Rapid Rehousing Programs at entrance to the program the person was unhoused due to:

- **#1: Domestic Violence or Fleeing Domestic Violence**
- **#2: Mental Health**
- **#3: Physical or developmental disabilities**

Of people entering the coordinated entry system people were unhoused due to:

- **#1: Disability**
- **#2: Mental Health**
- **#3 Chronic Health**

The demographic of someone that is homeless in Mason County are single adults and families. The largest percentage of adults in emergency shelters and rapid rehousing programs in Mason County are cis women at approximately 59% compared to 40% cis males and 1% transgender. Each person comes with different situations that lead them to homelessness, but the largest percentage of adults that were sheltered has a domestic violence history at 58% and of that population 41% was fleeing domestic violence. This shows that some of the homeless population coming to the shelters and rapid-rehousing programs and are domestic violence survivors. Persons experiencing domestic violence, particularly women and children with limited economic resources, are at increased vulnerability to homelessness according to HUD. Many survivors must leave their homes to escape violence but may not have access to safe housing and needed services. Other causes for homelessness were the person having mental health struggles at 45%. Other factors at large percentages were having a physical or developmental disability at 43%. Less common factors that contributed to homelessness was drug use at 9% and chronic health issues at 21%. Looking at coordinated entry in Mason County, the demographics are similar in 2021 as 55% were female and 44% were male. 74% have a disability, 22.5% have a chronic health condition, 35% have mental health disorder, and 12% have SUD (alcohol, drug use, or both).

From the point in time count of 2022, using unofficial data from the surveys collected the top 5 self-declared circumstances leading to homelessness for unsheltered households were mental illness, disabilities, alcohol/ substance abuse, loss of housing, and domestic violence. The percentages for self-declaration of disabling conditions and barriers to housing independence were: 38% had a permanent physical disability, 16% had a developmental disability, 22% had a chronic health condition, 47% had a mental health disorder, 39% had substance use disorder, and 16% were fleeing domestic violence.

From the Balance of State HUD report from 2020, it demonstrates a difference between sheltered versus unsheltered populations:

- 84 sheltered homeless had severe mental illness compared to 386 unsheltered homeless.
- 84 sheltered homeless had substance use disorders compared to 340 unsheltered homeless.
- 228 sheltered homeless were veterans compared to 166 unsheltered.
- 1 sheltered homeless was a person with AIDS versus 0 unsheltered.
- 286 sheltered homeless were domestic violence survivors compared to 145 unsheltered.
- 248 sheltered homeless were unaccompanied youth compared to 179 unsheltered.
- 50 sheltered homeless were parenting youth compared to 11 unsheltered.
- 68 sheltered homeless were children of parenting youth and 15 unsheltered.

Solutions to homelessness in Mason County is to look at the different causes and be able to help those in the biggest needs for supports. The biggest issue currently is the need for more permanent supportive housing.

Testimonials

Below are some testimonials from our community partners on the clients they serve and help each day. These testimonials should represent the homeless population in Mason County:

Shelton Family Center (DBA The Youth Connections)

“As a hands-on organization we see young people who are distrustful of adults stating they will help and not following through. Our homeless youth are resourceful and will find ways to survive. Unfortunately, these ways can be harmful to them. Everyday TYC hears about a young person sharing they are living in an abandoned buildings, cars, streets, or trading favors for a place to sleep inside. Exploitation from chronic homeless older adults is very prevalent and actively happening, exchanging favors again for protection from others. TYC has had to navigate safe ways to intervene in these difficult times. We have young people who have been kicked out of homes due to sexual identity, or significant others who are not approved of by families, and others who just cannot afford the raised rents in the community. We have seen young people who are currently full time employed and not able to get an apartment due to lack of rental history or credit scores.”

Crossroads Housing

Diversion- “Client called me and was staying in a hotel. Had to be out in next few days and did not have the funds to stay. Diversion conversations led to client having family in another state they could stay with if able to get there. Client did need assistance with funds to get there. I helped with transportation, airfare and food to relocate to family. Follow up led to them being stable there, looking for work and very grateful for our services.”

Coordinated Entry- “Client came to me and was in a difficult situation. Living with abuser and desperate to get out. Children were involved. Due to clients profession, there are services they were uncomfortable reaching out for. I worked with client weekly on applying for places, connecting to outside services, and breaking down housing barriers. Like paperwork for animal, household documents, MH services, child care, DV services. Client was able to find a rental and get into a safe housing situation. Extremely grateful for the help we had given when they felt lost with little to no hope. Client is now safe and doing amazing.”

Client Testimonial- "I am a 56-year-old female, and I am living on a fixed income from SSDI. I used to have my own property for many years. It was passed down from my grandmother when she passes. I was unable to pay my taxes and had it taken away from me. I was homeless for over 10 years and, was tired of not having a place to call my own. I went from shelters to the streets and felt I would never have a place to call my own again. So, when I found out I was going to have a baby and at my age, I was scared. How could I have a baby and live on the streets? When I came to Crossroads Housing, I had recently been told I was "Unhousable" by another agency. I felt defeated and unwelcome. The team at Crossroads Housing gave me a fresh start. I was brought into their family shelter and was given a beautiful unit to stay in. I was given a case manager Samantha Yarbrough. She worked with me on signing up for available housing. We worked on my credit, and she even went to bat for me when talking to landlords. After a short stay in shelter, I was given the opportunity to go on their Permanent Supportive Housing program. Samantha got me into my own one-bedroom unit and worked with me every week to find permanent housing. She found me ways to increase my income by utilizing the CSEP program through work source. In doing so I was able to get approved for an amazing two-bedroom unit that I share with a friend of mine who was also needing help with housing. I am so grateful that Crossroads housing never gave up on me. Without them and their programs I would not be where I am today."

Special thank you to our community partners!